

SHIP'S HISTORY, U.S.S. BRISTOL (DD-857)

The BRISTOL (DD-857) was commissioned 17 March 1945 at the Bethlehem Steel Company, San Pedro, California. She is a 692 Class short hull destroyer, named in honor of the late RADM M. L. BRISTOL, former U.S. High Commissioner in Turkey and holder of the Distinguished Service Medal.

The BRISTOL arrived in the Pacific too late to see action in World War II, but served with the Occupation Fleet in Japanese waters at the conclusion of the war.

In April 1946, the BRISTOL joined the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and operated out of East Coast Ports for the remainder of the year. The ship was shortly ordered to foreign duty and arrived in England in February 1947. During this cruise she visited Belgium, France, Denmark, Scotland, Sweden, Portugal, and Gibraltar. She returned to Newport, R.I., in August 1947.

From then until September 1948 the ship conducted limited operations in the Atlantic. From September 1948 until January 1949 the ship operated with the SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean.

Upon her return, she was designated as a Reserve Training Ship and operated out of New Orleans, La. During the summer and fall of 1950, the ship visited most of the leading ports in the Caribbean with interim periods of training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

On 21 October 1950 the BRISTOL changed her home port to Newport, and after completion of refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, she reported for general duty operating out of Newport. On 5 March, while operating on spring maneuvers, the BRISTOL proceeded to the Mediterranean to join the Sixth Fleet. During the three months tour of duty, she visited North Africa, France, Italy, and Sicily.

On 2 October 1951, the ship commenced a round-the-world cruise which took her to ports in the Panama Canal Zone, California, Hawaii, Midway, Japan, Okinawa, and a tour of duty in Korea. After her tour of duty in the war zone, she returned to Japan, then proceeded to Hong Kong, Singapore, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Suez Canal Zone, and back through the Mediterranean, arriving in Newport on 21 April 1952. From June to September 1952, the ship was in the Boston Naval Shipyard for overhaul.

The BRISTOL was awarded the Battle Efficiency Plaque for the fiscal year ending 30 June 1952, by the Commander Destroyer Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

From the latter part of September to November 1952, she spent a period of refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In January 1953, the ship got underway for a five month tour of duty in Northern Europe and Mediterranean waters. During the first two months of the cruise she visited ports in England, Scotland, Netherlands, France, and Ireland. The BRISTOL was in Amsterdam when the flood disaster struck the Netherlands. The crew voluntarily contributed over \$600.00 and several hampers of clothing for the relief of the flood victims.

Following her tour in Northern European waters the BRISTOL joined the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean. She returned to the States on May 18th.

On July 17th the BRISTOL departed on a six week Midshipman Cruise which took her to the Caribbean where she visited the Canal Zone, Trinidad and Guantanamo Bay.

During November and December 1953, the BRISTOL underwent repairs at the Boston Naval Shipyard.

On 8 January 1954, the ship embarked for England. While in England the ship visited Plymouth and Londonderry in Ireland. After spending January and February in England, she returned to the States, arriving at Brooklyn Naval Shipyard on 15 March 1954.

In May 1954 BRISTOL returned to Newport, where she operated for a few weeks. July 4, 1954, the ship visited BRISTOL, R.I., where she participated in the celebration of Independence Day.

From July to October 1954, the ship was in the Boston Naval Shipyard for overhaul. From there she went to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for refresher training.

Fleet Training exercises in the Atlantic and operation SPRINGBOARD in February saw the BRISTOL busy out of St. Thomas and San Juan until April 1955.

Between April and July 1955 BRISTOL was assigned to anti-submarine duty with COMANTISUBLANT, in training for convoy escort.

Preparation for another four month tour with the Sixth Fleet came in July, as did BRISTOL's departure for the Mediterranean. Her return on 25 November left BRISTOL in Newport, R.I., for tender upkeep and a leave period until February 1956.

BRISTOL was assigned to anti-submarine duty under COMANTISUBLANT again in February and participated in the NATO exercise NEW BROOM V in May, and in various HUK operations. Prior to departure on midshipman cruise "CHARLIE" on 13 July, the ship was in Newport for an upkeep and tender availability.

Upon her return from cruise "CHARLIE", the ship stayed in Newport until she reported to Boston in late November for overhaul. Following overhaul BRISTOL steamed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for refresher training with the Fleet Training Group.

BRISTOL spent the summer of 1957 again on a Midshipman cruise to Valpariso via the Panama Canal. During the fall of 1957, the ship engaged in NATO exercises. While on these exercises the ship steamed north of the Arctic Circle. BRISTOL returned to Newport late in November and after a brief period for leave and upkeep, departed on a Mediterranean cruise with the Sixth Fleet. BRISTOL returned to Newport on 12 April 1958.

From April to June 1958 BRISTOL enjoyed a leave and upkeep period and participated in type training exercises in the Newport area. In June the ship departed for Bergen, Norway, Balboa, Spain, and Hamburg, Germany for a six week Midshipman cruise and Fleet Exercise (LANTFLEX 1958).

Upon her return to Newport, BRISTOL engaged in local operations and in October reported for duty with COMASDEVFORLANT and participated in various anti-submarine (hunter-killer) exercises in the Western Atlantic until December 1958.

On 5 January 1958 the BRISTOL ended a two week holiday leave period and steamed to the Caribbean where she participated in Operation Springboard. During this two month operation the ship stopped in San Juan, Puerto Rico; St. Thomas, Virgin Islands; and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The ship arrived back in Newport in the last week of February and started preparing for an overhaul in the Boston Naval Shipyard.

The ship started a very successful overhaul on 24 March 1959 and three months later, on 24 June, left the shipyard to return to Newport. The period from 24 June to 12 July was spent busily preparing for Refresher Training. The heavy work schedule was interrupted by a very pleasant Fourth of July weekend in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where the ship was hosted by the Navy League.

On 12 July 1959 the BRISTOL departed from Newport and arrived in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba on 17 July to start six weeks of Refresher Training under the cognizance of Fleet Training Group, GTMO. The ship left Guantanamo on 28 August with a high score.

Two weeks after her arrival in Newport on 14 September, the ship, under the operational control of Commander Destroyer Development Group TWO, commenced a three week operation conducting scientific research in conjunction with the General Electric Company. The BRISTOL returned to Boston Naval Shipyard on 4 October for repairs and left the shipyard on 26 October for TRAILER 4-59, an amphibious training exercise off Onslow Beach, North Carolina.

Upon her return to Newport on 10 November 1959, the BRISTOL was assigned school ship for the DESLINT Engineering School. The BRISTOL served as school ship until May 1960. Throughout this period she operated independently on shore operations.

On Friday, 6 May 1960, the BRISTOL put to sea and occupied a search and rescue station 250 miles west of Ireland for the President's flight to Paris to attend the ill-fated Summit Conference.

Upon completion of the President's eastbound flight, BRISTOL sailed to Thorshavn, Faeroe Islands, to embark the Honorable Val Peterson, U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, and Captain K.P. Hance, USN, U.S. Naval Attache to Denmark, for a short cruise to Frederik havn, Denmark, where the Ambassador debarked. The ship then visited Odense, Denmark, with Captain Hance embarked, for a few days prior to sailing for Newport, R.I.

BRISTOL's arrival in Thorshavn, Faeroe Islands, and Odense, Denmark, marked the first time in history that an American Warship had called in either of these two ports. These two memorable events were keynoted by the warm hospitality and friendship shown the officers and crew by local populace, civic and military organizations.

BRISTOL's return cruise to Newport included a ten hour fueling stop at Ponta Delgada, Azores.

The rest of June 1960 was spent in Newport undergoing overhaul and maintenance, and providing the background and scenes for the shooting of a training film on electrical safety.

The ship visited Bristol, Rhode Island, for the Fourth of July weekend and then, after participating in LANTFLEX BRAVO 2-60, off the Carolina Capes, returned to Newport to prepare for deployment in the Mediterranean.

Operating with the SIXTH FLEET in the Mediterranean the ship visited Golfo di Palmas, Sardinia; Augusta Bay, Sicily and Beirut, Lebanon.

Transiting the Suez Canal in mid September, BRISTOL began a two month independent patrol in the Middle East, visiting Massawa, Eritrea, Ethiopia; Bahrain Island, Persian Gulf; Dubai, Trucial Oman Coast; Kuwait Town, Kuwait; Muscat, Oman; Karachi, Pakistan and Aden, Aden Protectorate. During this period the ship participated in Operation HAILMARK and the MIDLINK III Exercises of CENOT.

Leaving the Middle East in late November, the ship rejoined the SIXTH FLEET, visiting Athens, Greece; Naples, Italy and Malta. The Christmas and New Year's holidays were spent in Villefranche, France.

After having spent Christmas and New Year's holidays in Villefranche, France, BRISTOL returned to Newport late in February.

From March to April BRISTOL enjoyed a leave and upkeep period and participated in type training exercises in the Newport area.

In April the ship departed the United States to participate in Operation Mercury in the Atlantic. The Canary Islands were visited and the ship returned to Newport in early May.

The summer months found the ship in the Boston Naval Shipyard for overhaul.

After spending the summer in Boston, the ship operated out of Newport for two weeks shaking down, then departed Newport in mid October for six weeks of refresher training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

BRISTOL was twice deployed on special operations while in the Caribbean. On the first, having narrowly avoided the path of hurricane Hattie, the ship became involved in the Hattie disaster operations at Belize and Stann Creek, British Honduras. On the second operation BRISTOL was an element of the Task Force operating off the coast of the Dominican Republic near Santa Domingo and Barahona.

During the ship's interrupted refresher training schedule the liberty port of Ocho Rios, Jamaica was visited.

The ship returned to Newport in time for the Christmas holidays for a leave and upkeep period.

BRISTOL returned to Guantanamo Bay to finish her refresher training in January 1962.

BRISTOL departed Newport, Rhode Island, on 9 March 1962 for deployment with the SIXTH FLEET. Upon arrival in the Mediterranean the BRISTOL relieved the USS WREN (DD-568) and proceeded to Thessaloniki, Greece, for a tender availability along side the USS TIDEWATER (AD-37) from 27 March until 12 April.

On 15 April the ship transited the Dardanelles and anchored in the Strait of Bosphorus. After four days liberty in Istanbul, Turkey, BRISTOL got underway with the other units of task group 60.2 for fleet operations.

The ship's next stop was in Catania, Sicily, from 28 April until 2 May and then more fleet operations were followed by a week on the Italian Riviera at San Remo.

The last week of May BRISTOL visited Bastia, Corsica. On 30 May, 1962 BRISTOL left the Mediterranean in company with the USS DICKSON (DD-708) enroute to Newport, R.I., with a fueling stop at Rota, Spain. BRISTOL and DICKSON arrived in their home port on 12 June 1962 for a leave and upkeep period.

After spending the Holidays in Newport, Rhode Island, BRISTOL returned to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to finish her refresher training in January, 1962.

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BRISTOL visited Kingston, Jamaica, during that country's independence day celebrations from 3-8 August, while participating in a Midshipman Cruise.

The ship spent September in Newport acting as standby ship for the Americas Cup Races concurrently with a tender availability.

On 26 November, 1962, BRISTOL departed Newport, R.I. for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to act as an element of the defense units insuring the integrity of the Naval Base after the Cuban Crisis. The Holidays were spent quietly patrolling Caribbean waters in the vicinity of Guantanamo Bay.

On 5 January, 1963 BRISTOL returned to Newport and remained there for upkeep until 7 February 1963 when she again departed for a Mediterranean tour. Later in February, she steamed through the Suez Canal and took part in the Red Sea patrol.

On 16 April 1963 BRISTOL again transited the Suez to rejoin the Sixth Fleet and take part in joint operations with the Italian and French Navy. Ports visited on the cruise included Naples, Italy; Beirut, Lebanon; Aiden, British Protectorate; Massawa, Ethiopia; and the Perim Islands.

In June BRISTOL departed the Mediterranean and was assigned as a Rescue Destroyer for the President's flight to Europe. During the Rescue Operation, she visited the Azores for a refueling stop and St. Johns, Newfoundland for liberty.

On 5 July 1963 BRISTOL returned to Newport for a period of upkeep.

On 1 September, 1963 BRISTOL was transferred to Reserve Destroyer Squadron Thirty and her home port was shifted to New York.

In November BRISTOL entered the shipyards in Hoboken, New Jersey for her regular overhaul.

On 26 February 1964 her overhaul complete, BRISTOL departed for Refresher Training in Cuba with a two week stopover in Mayport, Florida.

During the last two weeks of Refresher Training BRISTOL had her Selected Reserve crew aboard for the first time and visited Kingston, Jamaica for weekend liberty.

After a trying but successful period of training on 14 April 1964 BRISTOL returned to Brooklyn for a period of upkeep.

In May the ship made its regular Selected Reserve Crew week-end cruise and then proceeded to St. Johns, New Brunswick for a two week cruise. The highlight of the summer was a 29 day cruise to the Azores; Lisbon, Portugal, and Palma de Mallorca in June and July.

As a refreshing retreat from the summer heat, in August BRISTOL made a cruise to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island to participate in the Charlottetown Natal Day celebration. The summer was ended with a two-week cruise to Boston. This included participation in Fleet wide ASW exercises, the last week-end with the Selected Reserve Crew embarked.

October found BRISTOL alongside the USS TIDEWATER (AD 37) at Bayonne, New Jersey for a tender availability.

In November the ship made a two-week cruise to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and enjoyed several days in the warmth of the tropical sun.

The holidays were spent in Brooklyn with a pier-side training cruise for Naval Reservists from the New York area, Boston and the Mid-West.

The new year started with a period of upkeep and an administrative inspection. San Juan, Puerto Rico was liberty port for a cruise during the last two weeks of January. The nucleus crew and a full complement of reservists enjoyed the colorful Spanish American culture and returned well tanned to Brooklyn.

Following a week-end in Brooklyn, BRISTOL was underway to Newport for a three week tender availability alongside USS CASCADE (AD 16). Then, after the Selected Reserve Crew week-end cruise, the ship ended the month of February with a two week cruise to Bermuda.